4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

worn is black. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relations in the village shave their heads three days after a death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool in the road outside the village and his head is shaved by an old woman. For three days after the death of anyone of importance the villagers do not cultivate.

If a big chief dies all the surrounding people collect at the village; even if a neighbouring clan is at war hostilities are suspended, and they attend the funeral rites of their late enemy. In the case of the death of a chief a new hut is built and the deceased is buried inside in a sitting posture; the grave is dug by a brother of the deceased. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown are put into the grave; sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink *tembo* for ten days and many oxen are slaughtered. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for about a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

Birth customs.—On the occasion of a birth, if it is a boy it is kept inside the house for four days, if it is a girl for three days. When a birth takes place the female neighbours attend, and a goat is killed for the mother and the other women. No man is allowed in the hut until three or four days have elapsed. The father of the child does not eat or sleep again in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go to cultivate for about nine days after the birth.

If a woman has had two children and they have both died, she will upon the birth of the third child take it out of the village on a basket-work tray and place it in the road; an old woman who has had a hint of this will go and pick it up and take it to her house, then the father of the child goes and buys it back for a goat: having recovered it the father bores the lobe of its right ear and inserts a small earring of brass wire. If the child is a boy it is henceforward called Owiti and if a girl it is called Awiti, meaning the child that has been thrown away. The old woman who picked up the child is afterwards called mother in addition to the real mother.

Twins are considered lucky, but the infants and their parents have to stay in seclusion in their hut for a whole month. Women neighbours may enter the hut but men may not. The twin born first is called Apio (the one who comes quickly). The twin born second is called Adongo (the one who is delayed). The birth of twins is signalised by dances which extend over a whole month; they are apparently of a somewhat obscene character.

Marriage customs.—Girls are espoused at the age of seven, and they often go to their husband's house at the age of ten or eleven. The suitor commences by making small payments to the father of the girl every month or two. When the man has paid say one cow and twenty sheep he takes the girl to his house.

The unmarried girls of the village take the bride to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat and a quantity of *ntawa* porridge to the man's village by way of providing a wedding feast. If the man's

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920)1928 FL11 Luo FL11

845 852 smears a little clay in front of both ears of all the people who come to the feast, and each of them do the same to the mother in return. All of them decorate their necks and waist with *bwombwe*, a creeping plant; then they start a most immodest dance; [831] [786] scarcely covered with their goatskins they simulate the copula, and the vilest songs, which no decent person could ever listen to. After the dance they enter the kraal ● 535 where food is ready. Then they have the beer. The relations of the woman stay over for the night, but all the others go home.

852 831 535 786 *Miend Kumu* is a similar dance, which is indulged in, when a woman has given birth to a child, of whose conception she did not get aware of for some considerable time. The people who come to this dance are far fewer; it does not last as long either. In stead of a bull only a goat is killed by the relations of the woman, and some beer is brewn for the feast. Other ceremonies are the same as after childbirth under usual circumstances.

Betrothal and Marriage.

584 Before any other arrangements are made, a boy intending to get married tells his parents that he wants to look out for a partner through life. If the father has any cattle towards the dowry he will agree, and tells his son to make his choice, and inform her relations. When he has found a likely girl he invites a couple of friends, one of whom at least knows the relations of the girl well [882] *(jatielo)*. With his friends he pays a visit to the kraal of the girl, and enters the *simba* i. e. the hut in which the boys of the kraal live.

No sooner have they entered the *simba* or the girls of the place go to greet the visitors, after which they bring them pipes and tobacco and go to fetch or prepare some gruel for them to drink. In the meantime the *jatielo* goes to the hut of the particular girl's father to tell him that a friend of his has come for his daughter. The father will inquire from the *jatielo* what kind of lad the boy is, whether he is of good family, whether he is not the son of a witchdoctor, whether he can pay a decent dowry, ect.

If the father agrees the *jatielo* goes back to his friends in the *simba* and reports that the father is willing, whereupon the boy proposes to the girl. There and then the girl decides whether she agrees or not. If she does not want the boy, then all is finished and visitors go home at once. If she agrees, they stay for the night. They sleep in the *simba* seperately together with the other boys and girls.

583 Then, in former years, in the early morning the visitors would catch the girl after she had left the *simba*, and take her to her fiance's village *(mako)*. On account of a government regulation, by which the dowry is now more or less fixed, this practice is no longer adhered to.

583 585 The boy and his friends go home. He informs his parents, who next day send the *jatielo* back with somebody else to pay the first instalment of the dowry, usually 2 or 3 head of cattle. They stay over the night, and in the morning they catch *(mako)* the girl, for she pretends not to like going along. After they have had some gruel to drink, the boys who brought the cattle more or less drag her out of the kraal. The girls from her village strip her absolutely naked, and the boys from there follow those who fetch the girl to take from them some of their orna-

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

food for the child, but they themselves only drink beer. On the last day all the iron, brass and other ornaments which deceased used to wear are sprinkled with some beer, made of kaffir-corn, which has previously been sacrificed. Then the ornaments are devided amongst the relations, who will wear them in future. After this all go home.

Next morning a sheep is killed and eaten. The wet skin is called the garment of deceased, and as such is worn for that day by his eldest son. At night it is slung over the gateway, where in time it rots away or some hyena finds it and makes off with it.

Every person, whether man, woman or child, is buried absolutely naked, and without any ornaments; even the little brass rings with a big blue bead each, which the old men wear all along the edge of both ears are taken out immediately after his death. To this rule there is one exception only. A *jabilo*, who is not an ordinary medicine-man, but one who has secret medicine, which he does not use for evil purposes except in warfare, is considered the greatest among men. For this reason he is specially honoured at his death. A big bull is killed and offered as a sacrifice, and the *jabilo* is buried in the fresh skin of the animal.

Burial of a Woman.

From the moment of a woman's death wailing goes on till next morning about 10 o'clock, when either her husband or her son dig the grave. All her ornaments are taken off, like at the occasion of a man's death.

Every woman is buried inside her own hut; because a woman is called the owner of the hut *(wonjot)*; hence at her death the hut has served its purpose.

When the grave is ready deceased's husband, assisted by two other people put her down in it, lying on her left side (men on their right). Her children fill up the grave scraping the earth with hands and feet, heir backs towards the corpse. The wailing goes on for another half hour whilst the crowds gather.

Then all the women and girls prepare themselves for a kind of wardance to take place near the village. They take off their tassels which they throw on the roof deceased's hut. They smear themselves with mud, and dress themselves up in the war-dress of the men who came to the funeral (shields and spears left at home).

Whilst the girls and women are dancing to the beating of drums, the men and boys squat down in the village and smoke hemp. After about an hour they come back from the dance, return their apparel to the men and go home. But the men remain till the afternoon, and those living near by call again at night for a chat.

After 3 days the women of the neighbourhood gather again in order to cook and eat the dried meat, fish and other food which the deceased left in the hut at her death. After the meal they go to sweep the grave (on the 3rd day, not the 4th as after the burial of a man) gathering some earth of it in an old basket, which is put on the path outside the kraal together with her socalled pillow *(orindo)*. They also give away deceased's hoe to an old woman, and throw away its handle.

On the same day the husband of deceased and one old woman go round to the huts of the near relations, sprinkling in each hut some medicine, throwing in each hut the seedball of an ochokplant, and gathering from its inhabitants a small

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

schooling of wives, but modern young women sometimes rebel against this ordered régime, choosing rather to do as they please in their new homes.

Since the introduction of the plough, the part played by men in the cultivation of the fields has greatly increased. Clearing and ploughing are now done by men, but planting and harvesting are still carried on largely by women.

Women's organizations. In the past, women's activities were limited in number. Apart from the communal dancing parties in which they took a great pride, there existed among certain related families councils to settle disputes and misconduct among women. This communal organization has tended to become weaker with the growing family individuality introduced by modern conditions.

While Christian influence has increased their freedom by releasing women from tribal prejudice and by widening the horizon of men's views, pagan women are still hampered from taking an active part in modern economic and social activities.

Women's organizations range from small religious groups to registered co-operative societies. The management of the co-operative societies is largely in the hands of Christian women. They are thus more progressive than their pagan neighbours, although the gap is rapidly narrowing owing to the influence exercised by Christian women upon the other women in the community.

The changing economy. Before the introduction of a money economy, the garden formed the basis of the economic life of women. Their transactions depended on garden produce which they bartered in exchange for live animals. The more industrious and economical thus acquired considerable wealth, supplementing garden

[Text continues on p.55]